

Message Text

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53

ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 SAM-01 IO-14 ACDA-19 DRC-01 /127 W

----- 068308

R 141034Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1218

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 1659

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SY

SUBJECT: REACTION TO PRESIDENT FORD'S INAUGURATION

1. SYRIAN REACTION TO THE INAUGURATION OF GERALD FORD AS THE 38TH PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES HAS BEEN RELATIVELY MUTED. THE LOCAL PRESS MEDIA HAS GIVEN THE EVENT COMPLETE AND STRIGHT COVERAGE BUT THERE HAVE BEEN EDITORIAL COMMENTS.

2. POPULAR REACTION HAS BEEN MARKED BY INTENSE INTEREST BUT CONSIDERABLE CONFUSION AS TO THE LONG-TERM IMPORT OF THE DEVELOPMENTS IN WASHINGTON OVER THE LAST WEEK OR SO. MANY PEOPLE ARE OBVIOUSLY CONCERNED THAT THE DEPARTURE OF PRESIDENT NIXON WILL ALTER U.S. POLICY TOWARDS THE ARABS. AS MANY POINT OUT, PRES NIXON HAD VISITED THE ARAB WORLD, PARTICULARLY DAMASCUS, AND HAD MADE A GOOD IMPRESSION. MOST CONTACTS I HAVE SPOKEN TO, HOWEVER, WELCOME PRES FORD'S COMMITMENT TO CONTINUE PRES NIXON'S FOREIGN POLICY, PARTICULARLY WITH REGARD TO THE MIDDLE EAST. MANY OF THEM ALSO EXPRESS SATISFACTION WITH THE FACT THAT PRES FORD ATTENDED SECRETARY KISSINGER'S BRIEFING IN THE WHITE

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HOUSE FOR ARAB AMBASSADORS. NONETHELESS, THE MOOD HERE IN

DAMASCUS IS ONE OF WATCHING AND HOPEFUL WAITING, ALTHOUGH
MOST APPEAR WILLING TO GIVE PRES FORD THE BENEFIT OF THE
DOUBT, AT LEAST FOR THE TIME BEING.
SCOTES

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NNN

Message Attributes

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